Cages in the Basement

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/58658920.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warnings:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings, Rape/Non-Con
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham, Adam Raki, Alana Bloom, Jack Crawford, Beverly Katz, Jimmy Price, Brian Zeller
Additional Tags:	Hannibal Lecter Loves Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter is the Chesapeake Ripper, Alpha Hannibal Lecter, Omega Will Graham, Adam Raki is Will Graham's Child, This is the second part guys., Read the other one first., Not beta read we die like Antony Dimmond, Medical Inaccuracies, Probably., Autism Spectrum, Implied/Referenced Rape/Non-con, Not between mains, Hannibal aint like that, Flashbacks, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD, Trauma, Childhood Trauma, Sex Trafficking, A/B/O, Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics, Implied/Referenced Suicide, Implied/Referenced Self-Harm, Miscarriage, Canon-Typical Violence, Blood and Injury
Language:	English
Series:	Part 3 of What The Little Mouse Brings Series
Stats:	Published: 2024-09-02 Updated: 2024-11-08 Words: 11,597 Chapters: 3/15

Cages in the Basement

by WinstonsDad

Summary

This is the sequel to What The Little Mouse Brings. It won't make any sense unless you have read that one.

Notes

hello Gorgeous
Told you there was another part ;)

love you xx

Laying stones

“I know you don’t feel like eating, but you must.” Hannibal says as he pushes Adam’s breakfast bowl towards him at the counter.

The pup huffs and picks up his spoon, taking the tiniest scoop of cheerios onto it and places them in his mouth.

Hannibal ruffles Adam’s hair as he passes by him to return the breakfast things to their rightful places.

He has decided though that his kitchen will need a complete refit. After the crime scene cleaner had come, once the FBI took as much evidence as they could find, it had been cleaned to a certain degree. But the smell of blood and Will’s fear still lingers. Hannibal believes it could be ingrained in the very materials the kitchen is made of. He worries that if he does replace all the units, the flooring, that the smell might even have permeated the very structure of the house.

It could also be all in his head.

Jack Crawford has visited and said nothing of the lingering scent of distressed angry omega. Beverly has also stopped by. Alana hasn’t.

Alana. Brave, brilliant Alana. Her help over the last few weeks has been immeasurable. Hannibal feels indebted to her, even though she won’t hear of it. Her work with Adam has especially helped. And while he hasn’t said anything else since Hannibal found them locked in a room in Mason Vergers home, both Hannibal and Alana are hopeful that one day, maybe, Adam will verbally communicate again.

Until then, Alana has given Hannibal picture cards to help Adam express himself. Visual aids that allow him to talk to Hannibal in a way. Help him ask questions, help him express emotions and understand what he’s feeling. It’s not perfect and quite often the cards are launched across the room by a very angry pup, but they’re both trying.

She also arranged a specialist therapist for Adam who helps children who have suffered trauma and who have learning difficulties. Hannibal hopes it will stop Adam screaming in the night for his Mama soon.

While Hannibal has never needed more than a few hours sleep each night those hours are precious and tending to Adam during a nightmare is exhausting.

A five year olds fist to an already bruised eye is a challenge to anyones nerves.

But today is not one to dwell on the night, it's a big day. Adam is attending his first day at a specialist school for children with Autism. It's only three days a week but Hannibal feels like they are going to be the longest days of his life without the pup.

He's still not back with his patients and is considering never returning. But he cant make that decision now.

He heads out to the foyer and retrieves Adam's shoes, returning to the kitchen to put them on the pups feet while he finishes his bowl of cereal extremely slowly.

Hannibal straightens and looks down at the boy. He could use a haircut but that kind of overstimulation is not one Hannibal wants to take on by himself. Not after the last time. Hannibal shudders at the thought. He's lucky he has been seeing his barber for so long and pays him so well. The man needed stitches after all, Adam sharp little fangs ripping the skin of his forearm. Hannibal had footed the medical bill as an apology.

"Are you finished with your breakfast Adam?" Hannibal asks gently, tilting his head.

The boy pushes the bowl away again and hops down from the stool, then looks down frowning at his feet. He lifts them one at a time, stomping the elevated foot as he does.

Hannibal chuckles. “Yes unfortunately you can’t wear firetruck slippers everywhere. Now let’s get your coat on, then go to the car.”

Hannibal has spend weeks reading. Books upon books that describe how to work with children with a learning difficulty. Books about autism in children. Autism in adults. Books written by adults with autism and how they have navigated a world not designed for them. Truly beautiful and inspiring works.

But all Hannibal can really parse from each one is that every person on the autistic spectrum is unique. There is no fix all. What works for one child or adult won’t work for another and so on and so forth.

One piece of advice given was to take each day as it comes. And to plan ahead. And hope those plans don’t change. Explain why and when tasks need to be done, if they get done? That’s a whole new challenge.

Hannibal can hear Adam behind him as he walks back to the foyer to retrieve their coats and Adam’s back pack. He passes the bag to Adam once his coat is on and the pup opens it, reaching inside to grab something out of it.

He quickly tucks the small object into his coat pocket and closes the bag. Hannibal doesn’t stop him, he knows its Adam’s firetruck. Hannibal painted Adam’s name on the side only yesterday so the toy wouldn’t get mixed up with the schools own toys. Adam had smiled and stroked his name once the paint dried.

Once in the car, strapped in and driving towards the school, the firetruck makes an appearance in Adam’s lap, his little fingers spin the wheels.

The school is only a short journey by car and Hannibal would walk if it wasn’t overcast outside. As it turns out Adam doesn’t like the rain and will not splash in puddles in bare feet.

Hannibal parks the car, turns off the engine and undoes his seat belt. He waits for a moment. The books say to take time when transitioning from one place to another.

“Adam, are you ready to get out of the car?” He asks as he turns to look through the front seats.

Adam reluctantly undoes his own seat belt and waits for Hannibal to exit the car and walk around to open his door.

Thankfully it still hasn’t started raining yet. He holds out his hand for the pup to take after he shrugs on his back pack. And they walk to the front door together.

Adam keeps his head down watching his feet as he walks but his grip on Hannibal’s hand is strong. The doors open automatically and they step into a calmly lit entrance, seats lined against one wall. A door with a badge security lock next to them on the other wall. In on corner is a reception desk with woman sitting behind it typing away on a computer.

They walk to the desk and the woman looks up at them and smiles.

“Hello Doctor Lecter!” She then looks down to Adam. “Hello Adam, are you here for your first day?”

The introduction to the school had taken a few trips. Hannibal was shown around first, then he came with Adam to look around, then Adam stayed for a few hours with Hannibal sitting at the small desks with him. Today is the first full day Adam will be here alone.

The receptionist doesn’t expect an answer from Adam. Which is good because he doesn’t give one.

“Yes, Susanne, this is Adam’s first full day. He’s eaten his breakfast and has a change of clothes in his bag as requested.”

She does a little happy clap and is possible her smile broadens. “I’ll let Miss Milly know you’re here!” She gestures for Hannibal and Adam to take a seat.

Hannibal nods his thanks and walks to the chairs and sits. Adam hasn’t let go of his hand so he pulls the small boy to stand in front of him. They’re not quite eye to eye, but close.

“Adam.” He says quietly. “I know you’re scared. I know there are very big feelings inside of you right now. And it’s ok to feel them.” He tucks a curl behind Adam’s little ear.

With a little tremble Adam produces the firetruck from his pocket and opens his hand, thrusting it forward a bit towards Hannibal.

Hannibal opens his own hand in front of him and Adam places the firetruck in it then stuffs his hand back into his pocket.

“Do you want me to take this home pup?” He whispers.

It takes a moment, then Adam takes his hand out of his pocket and reaches out to Hannibal’s chest, pushing hard on his suit jacket, above his heart.

Hannibal smiles. “I’ll put it here, see?” He places the truck in the inside pocket of his suit jacket, then pats it from the outside. “Right near my heart. To keep it safe.”

Adam leans forward, an invitation for Hannibal to kiss his forehead, which he does. A gentle light thing really. They stay like that a moment, Adam resting his forehead on Hannibal’s chin, turning his head slowly side to side, grounding himself.

The silence is disturbed by a buzzer as the locked door beside them opens. A young woman walks out, an omega by her scent. Miss Milly.

They have met her a few times now. She is soft and kind. Her voice just above a whisper, her perfume very subtle, like daisies. She doesn't panda to the children but she is patient.

"Adam, Doctor Lecter, so lovely to see you this morning." She beams at them both. Her scent welcoming and happy.

Adam stands back to let Hannibal stand and holds out the hand Adam is holding, Miss Milly holds her own out and the transfer from Hannibal's hand to hers is smooth.

Hannibal crouches down to Adam's level one last time. "I'll be here waiting for you, at 2pm."

Miss Milly gives Adam's arm a little jiggle as she holds his hand. "Let's go look at the fish Adam? They need to be fed. You can do it today."

Hannibal straightens and smiles at Miss Milly as they walk through the security door.

No goodbyes, no have a good days. Goodbye is a hard word and can mean the end, never to be seen again. And 'have a good day' puts pressure on a child to perform well, and what if they don't have a good day? Because every day cant possibly be a good one.

Hannibal walks briskly out of the school doors and back through the small parking lot to his car. He gets in the front seat and does up his seatbelt, as he pulls the strap across his chest it bumps into the firetruck in his pocket, square and bulky. He positions the seatbelt directly over it so he can feel its metal corners through his dress shirt, leaving indents in his skin.

Today he is meeting Alana for brunch at the same small cafe they met for breakfast all those months ago. When he was more confused than he had been his entire life.

His mind now is no longer confused. He knows what he wants, what his priorities are.

Hannibal is already seated by the window when Alana walks in. She looks lovely, like always. A simple wrap dress and peacoat. Boots and matching handbag. Her hair is loose over her shoulders in thick curls. She smiles when she sees him.

It had taken some time to get that smile from her again. After the incident with Mason Verger she had been wary of him. It hurt, of course it did. He had trusted her to care for and protect Adam. And while being kidnapped wasn't her fault, she felt terribly guilty for it. He never blamed her, he still doesn't now. But she had peaked behind the veil and not seen someone she knew when she witnessed his ability to kill. Her guilt and fear had forced its way into her heart and caused her to pull away.

But Hannibal needed her. He needed her friendship. He needed her expertise with traumatised children. And so he wouldn't allow her to leave him. Was it a manipulation to donate $200,000 to Port-haven Home for traumatised young adults and children? Alana's pride and joy?

Yes. Yes it was. Did it work? Yes. Yes it did.

Alana called him the day after the anonymous donation was made and accused him of being sneaky. He denied everything of course. They didn't speak of it when they met for lunch three days later. But she smirked in that way when she knew he was keeping a secret.

He stands as she gets closer, takes her hand and kisses her knuckles. She huffs out a small laugh, smiling broadly.

They sit down together, the waitress takes their order and they are left alone together again, Hannibal looking out of the window, Alana looking at Hannibal.

"How was this morning?"

Hannibal sighs. "Very well. No tears."

“From him or from you?” She asks kindly, a curl to the corner of her mouth.

He looks at her then and chuckles. “We both did very well in that case.”

She nods. “I’m glad to hear it.”

They fall silent again. The waitress brings them coffee, their food almost ready.

Hannibal knows Alana is going to push him. Of course she is. It’s why she asked to meet him this morning.

“Have you been to see him?” Her voice is soft, gentle.

Hannibal looks at his coffee cup, he doesn’t meet her eyes. “No.”

“The stone was finished yesterday, the engravers called to make sure the epitaph was correct. It’s been laid in place.”

Hannibal takes a deep breath. He can feel the sting of tears in the corners of his eyes and wills them away. He will not cry here. He doesn’t look up as the waitress delivers their food to the table. Alana thanks her for them both.

It looks delicious, poached eggs, toast, avocado. But he’s lost his appetite.

Alana clears her throat. She reaches across the table and lays it on the back of his own hand.

“We’ll go together, after this.”

It’s not a question or a command. It just is. He looks up at her then and forces a small grateful smile. They eat in silence.

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The drive is short. Hannibal follows Alana in his own car. Grateful for the short journey to collect his thoughts, pull the zipper on his person suit a little tighter. They park side by side and Alana is the first to get out.

Hannibal pushes the firetruck against his chest. Hard. The little metal corners of the toy dig in and sting. It’s grounding. He closes his eyes and two little hands appear in his own. Mischa and Adam, their giggles surround him in the darkness and he lets out the breath he was holding.

He exits the car and offers his arm to Alana who takes it with a small smile.

The place they’re looking for is not far from the little church that sits in the middle of the cemetery. But the grass is a little uneven, and damp. Alana clutches his arm at times to keep her balance.

When they get to the stone Hannibal is surprised at how beautiful it is. Small but tasteful. No cherubs or angels or anything gaudy like that. Will wouldn’t want that. No its a simple white granite stones that reads:

Gerald Robert Graham. July 2023

Son to William Graham & Hannibal Lecter.

'The other night, dear

As I lay sleeping

I dreamed I held you

In my arms

When I awoke, dear

I was mistaken

So I hung my head and cried'

Alana holds Hannibal's arm tighter, tugging it a little. "I didn't know you were a fan of Johnny Cash." Her teasing is gentle.

He smiles a little. "Ah no. I heard Will often humming the song to Adam."

She nods, accepting. "And the name?"

"Robert after my uncle. And Gerald…" he takes a deep breath. "Gerald took care of Will when he was young, loved him like a son, protected him."

Alana hums. "Do you think Will will approve?"

Hannibal tilts his head. "It's a bit late now, that stone cost a fortune."

Alana gasps and looks up at Hannibal who's blank face shows nothing of his humour. She slaps his arm and smiles.

They stay there for a little while longer, the wind teasing the tips of Alana's hair. When the clouds break and finally starts to rain they both walk back to the cars in silence, Hannibal holding Alana's umbrella over them both.

He walks her to her car and holds it over her head as she gets in. He folds the umbrella and hands it to her.

“Thank you Alana. For today.”

She smiles and nods. “You’re very welcome Hannibal. I’ll stop by soon, see Adam?”

He nods and closes her car door then retreats to his own car as the heavens open even more and rain becomes heavier. He watches as she pulls away, flashing her lights as she goes.

He doesn’t turn the key in the ignition. Doesn’t start the car. His fingers find his way into the inner pocket of his jacket. He takes out the toy fire engine, turns it over and over. He stops on the side that has Adam’s name painted on it and rubs his thumb over the delicate script, wiping away the few tears that spill on the gold lettering.

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“Good afternoon Doctor Lecter.” The nurse behind the desk greets him. “No Adam today?” She asks looking to his sides.

“Not today, he has started school.” She smiles back at her, plastic, false.

There are no true smiles when he visits. The grief too strong, too fresh.

“Thats great news.” She nods. “Well, Doctor Myrit has already been today, no changes I’m afraid. But that’s not bad news.” She hands Hannibal the patient file knowing full well he will request it at some point in his visit.

He takes it with another plastic file and continues down the hall to the private room.

Inside the lights are dimmed, the flowers on the windowsill are still fresh from yesterday. Orange lilies.

He takes off his coat and drapes it over the back of one of the chairs at the little table by the side of the room, then opens the file.

Vitals are all the same. Heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen levels. All normal. All within range of someone sleeping.

He puts the folder down on the table and takes the chair next to Will's bed. Somehow today Will looks even more lovely than he did the day before. Maybe its the early afternoon light or maybe its the sheen of tears still sitting in Hannibal's eyes. It doesn't matter.

He gently lifts Will's hand and kisses the back of his knuckles, then turns it so he can intertwine their fingers. His skin is clean and dry. Warm.

The bruises on Will's knuckles have faded, the cuts and scraps healed. The ones on his face are almost gone too. As are the marks on his neck, his chest. The broken ribs are healing, bones fusing back into place, where they should be.

The gash across his abdomen and resulting damage are taking longer to heal. Doctors had to remove parts of his large and small intestine, a small section of his bowel resulting in a temporary colostomy bag. His biggest lose was his uterus of course. The damage done was too severe. They had tried to save the pregnancy, tried to save the baby. But it was too soon, too much blood loss. Will body was too weak. Organ failure was still a possibility. The internal and external damage done to Will's fragile body over the years was extreme. They had already had to restart his heart twice. Scans showed minor brain damage, probably caused by repeated strikes to his head, frequent concussions, he had broken more bones than Hannibal could count, the thin lines in the scans repeated on every limb, almost every rib.

When he wakes he will have the guilt of losing his unborn pup for the rest of his life, no matter what Hannibal says, no matter how many times Hannibal tells him it wasn't his fault. But Will is a deep and loving creature, his heart vulnerable even in his strongest moments. Hannibal will be there though, to dry his tears, to hold him, to whisper kind soft things in his ear.

The machines beep and click and hum around him. The rest of the air silent.

Hannibal lays his head to rest on their joined hands. “The stone was laid today my love. It’s beautiful.”

He looks up at Will’s sleeping face, his dark eye lashes fanned on his cheek.

“Adam started school this morning. He was very brave. I am very proud of him.”

He sits up again and pushes Will’s fringe from his forehead with a gentle hand, lets the back of his knuckles stroke down Will’s stubbly cheek. He will shave him tomorrow.

He lets his head fall forwards, his eyes closed. “Breathe Will, that’s all you need to do right now. Just breathe.”

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When the security door opens at the end of the school door Adam is the first child to rush out. He throws himself at Hannibal’s legs making Hannibal grunt in surprise. Miss Milly walks over, leaving the TA’s to let the rest of the children be collected.

“He was amazing today.” She smiles.

“Of course he was.” Hannibal strokes the pups hair and Adams grip loosens a little. “Any trouble?”

Miss Milly shakes her head. “Nope. An excellent first day. He has a drawing in his bag for you.”

Hannibal looks down at the fluffy head under his hand. “Is that right Little Mouse?”

Adam doesn’t nod or speak, neither of them expect a response. Miss Milly excuses herself as another parent calls for her attention.

Hannibal scoops Adam up in his arms after the pup seems unable to let go of his pants leg. He carries him out to the car and opens the back passenger door for him. Adam shrugs off his back pack. Hannibal straps him in and before he closes the door he hands Adam his toy firetruck. The pup squeaks with delight and kicks his feet in his seat. Hannibal smiles and closes the door.

Once home and Adam is settled in the TV room watching his space documentary Hannibal goes to prepare dinner. He notices Adam backpack is not hanging on his hook and picks it up, remembering that Adam had drawn a picture for him.

He carries the bag into the kitchen and places it on the unit, unzipping the pocket as he does.

Inside is a slightly crumpled, folded piece of A4 paper. He unfolds it to find a drawing of three figures, standing under an apple tree. The sky is coloured in light blue, clouds sketched in childish scrawl.

The smallest figure is Adam, he’s drawn his own curly brown hair, coloured his own eyes blue. The figure beside him is Will, Hannibal chuckles a little at the same mass of swirls making up his curls. Will has been drawn with smiling face. Next to him is a very tall figure. Theres a blue line across its neck then down like a T shape. Adam has given him a tie. He’s drawn some straight lines on the head with grey crayon and Hannibal frowns at the audacity, he’s not that grey yet.

On the chest area of the Hannibal figure, Adam has scrawled a messy heart shape and coloured it red. Hannibal smiles.

He turns then and walks to his fridge, he removes the magnetised shopping list, and puts the drawing in its place, popping a simple black magnet meant to hold receipts at the top to hold it. He stands back to admire the new art in his kitchen and the light catches the image slightly, Hannibal narrows his eyes and can see at the bottom, written in yellow for some reason is the word ‘family’ in uneven letters.

Alpha 2

Chapter Notes

Hello Gorgeous
Thank you for continuing to support me on this wild ride!
I love you

Come find me on Twitter/X @WinstonsDad
x x

Edited to add that this chapter contains upsetting scenes. I'll add some ********* before it starts and finishes.
Stay safe x x

Time moves strangely in the dark. Will knows he eventually fell asleep. He dreamt of Gerald in his chair telling Will about his family, the photo album open on his lap but when Will looked, all of the photos were of himself, naked, alone in the shipping container. When he tried to tell Gerald he didn't want to look at them, the old man patted his hand and said 'But it's the truth boy, everything dies alone, I did.'

Will had cried, backing away. He woke having jerked himself back into the hard steel of the shipping container, bumping his spine.

The Omega beside him had shushed him and stroked his hair, wiped his tears with their damp palms. The air in the container had become so stale it was choking. The doors not having been opened since Will was pushed though it. Gasping for air didn't feed anymore oxygen into Will's blood and he found himself dizzy and sluggish.

When the large doors to the container opened, not the smaller one he had been pushed through, the light had blinded him. Fresh air swept in around his cold body and Will found himself shivering as the sweat dried on his skin.

He lifted a hand to shield his eyes, turned to look at the Omega beside him, to look at the one who had held him but realized the entire container was packed full of people, there were so

many pushed next to him he couldn't work out who had dried his tears in the night. Maybe they all had.

Two alphas stood at the opening and started shouting at them to stand, to get out. As Will rose up, his legs wobbling, weak from sitting in one position all night and day, the hand that had grabbed his reached for him again.

He looked down to see a young man, no older than himself. He took the hand and helped him stand. The other omega looked at him, reached up and wiped the tears that still fell from his eyes. He had the brightest green eyes Will had ever seen, ash blonde hair. He was beautiful.

They wrapped their arms around each other and walked to the opening of the container as instructed.

As they stumbled their way to where the guards lead them, Will looked around to see a group of alphas had gathered.

Men in suits, business attire. Some were watching them as they were herded to a pen, roped off with metal barriers in the middle of the warehouse. Other's were talking to each other, laughing, looking at their watches.

Once the Omegas were in the holding area, another barrier was placed to close them in. Will felt like a sheep being herded to the slaughter house.

Silence descended. The business men started walking around the outside of the pen, looking at the omegas, murmuring started as the alphas spoke to the man who had been behind the desk when Will was brought in by Ben.

A guard opened the pen up and dragged one of the omegas out and marched them outside of the warehouse, the alpha and the desk man following. And so it went on. One by one the omegas were removed, sold to the alpha who deemed them acceptable.

Some of them cried. Some of them fought back, kicking and screaming until they were subdued with a slap to the face, a punch to the gut.

A guard grabbed the omega that Will was still clinging too. Their eyes met and Will knew this was the last time he would see him. The man who had comforted him in the dark. They clung to each other, the omega's nails digging into the skin on Will's arm, he didn't mind, he was doing the same. Crying out to leave them alone, to not take him, the only other creature to show him kindness since Gerald had died.

Eventually the guard had enough and back handed Will across the face, he slumped to the ground and the omega was dragged away, screaming.

Will, dizzy, looked up to see where he had gone but he was too late. The omega was gone.

Another guard came for Will. He didn't put up a fight. Not knowing what else to do he just went calmly as the guard held on to the top of his arm in a bruising grip and walked him outside.

There, waiting was the alpha who had purchased him. He was very tall. Broad. Blonde hair neatly combed, blue eyes. His suit was tailored. Will didn't know anything about clothes or fashion but he could tell it was expensive. He was stood beside a sleek looking black car.

The guard holding Will shoved something into his hands, Will looked down and saw that it was clothes. He immediately struggled to get them on, the cold morning air was biting into his skin. He stepped into the grey sweat pants and pulled the black t-shirt over his head, his arm being grabbed once again.

The alpha said nothing to Will, he looked him up and down and nodded. The guard pulled Will forwards as the alpha opened the passenger door and he was bundled into the car.

It was nice to be out of the cold but Will sat shivering anyway. Fear and adrenaline pumping through his veins. He sat wring his hands together, leg bouncing.

The alpha then opened the drivers door and climbed inside. He didn't look at Will, he put on his seat belt and sat doing nothing.

Will frowned then scrabbled for his own seat belt, clicking into place. The alpha started the car and pulled away from the warehouse. Will watched out of the window as the other omegas were being put into cars, vans. Some were still fighting. One lay on the ground not moving, Will thought he could see blood. He didn't know if he was right to not fight or stupid.

He was too afraid this time to ask where he was going. The alpha beside him said nothing for the first hour of their journey and Will found himself dozing off.

He was awoken by a large hand on his thigh squeezing. He started and tried to pull away but the alpha held on tight.

"They said you're a virgin. That true?" The alpha asked, he licked his bottom lip, eyes still on the road.

Will nodded cautiously. His breath catching. So. That's what he had been bought for. His heart sank, his stomach turning in knots.

The alpha chuckled. "You smell real sweet. You near your heat?"

"Are you going to bond with me?" Will croaked, his voice dry from disuse.

The alpha laughed fully then and squeezed Will's thigh again. "No."

They didn't speak again. The alpha's hand only left his thigh as they turned deep curves in the road. Eventually they pulled up to a house. Will barely at the time to look at it from his seat before the Alpha was out, dragging him from the car and into the building.

He pushed Will before himself and closed the door, locking it.

Will looked around the hall he was in. It was sparse. Plain beige walls, a mirror. There was a coat rack with one coat hanging on it. The floor was grey tiled. Will wrapped his arms around his torso, scared to leave any marks from his dirty skin.

He turned to look at the alpha who had not moved from the door. He was staring at Will, looking him up and down, stopping for a few extra second at Will's neck.

Finally he spoke. "There is a room. At the top of the stairs." He gestured towards the staircase. "Take a shower in the ensuite, dress in the clothes provided on the bed." The alpha took a deep breath, then let it out slowly. "Be thorough in the shower. Your nails, your feet."

Will looked at the stairs then back at the Alpha and nodded slowly. He walked to the stairs then back over his shoulder as he climbed them. The alpha hadn't moved.

He found the room easily. It was the only open door. Clothes on the bed, ensuite door also open. He entered the room and looked at the clothes, plain soft pajama pants, white t-shirt.

The bed had a plain blue comforter. The walls were like those downstairs, beige, empty. The window held a wooden blind and when Will pulled it up to let light in he saw the glass was frosted, he couldn't see outside. It was also locked. There was dresser, wardrobe.

The ensuite had no window, just an extractor fan and plain like the other room. One towel hung on the towel rail. One bottle of shampoo, one bottle of body gel. He stripped his clothes quickly and turned on the shower, he set the temperature to almost scalding and stepped in.

He washed his hair first, the curls falling wet into his eyes. The he washed his body. He did as the alpha had requested and scrubbed himself with the washcloth. Making sure to rid himself of the dirt of the container, the sweat, the tears of the other omega.

He dried quickly and dressed in the clothes left out. When he tried the bedroom door it was locked. He backed up further into the room until his back hit the far wall. Sinking down he sat on the floor, his knees to his chest, arms wrapped around his torso.

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As it grew dark outside the bedroom door was finally opened and the Alpha stood holding a glass of water in his hand. Will stood up as he entered the room, the glass held out before him in offering.

“Drink.” He said nodding to the glass.

“I’m not thirsty.” Will muttered.

The alpha turned and put the glass down on the dresser top. When he turned back he slapped Will across the face, hard.

Will stumbled then regained his balance. His breath stuttered.

“Drink.” The alpha said again.

Will looked up at him through his dark lashes and curling fringe. “No.”

The slap this time came from the other hand and knocked Will into the side of the bed. He lost his footing and landed with a thump on the floor. He could taste blood.

He was grabbed by his hair and pulled up to standing as the Alpha growled at him in anger.

“Do as you are told!”

Will’s lip pulled back in a sneer. “No.” He huffed.

The alpha used the momentum of having pulled Will to his feet and threw him across the room, he hit the wall and slid down slightly, scrambling to get his balance. The alpha was on him at once, he shoved Will roughly against the wall, arm pinned up his back, bruised cheek scraping the paint. His shoulder screamed at him in protest, his wrist creaking. He let out an involuntary whimper.

“Fine.” The alpha growled in his ear. “It would’ve been easier for you, little cocktail of drugs to make it go all smooth. You want it the hard way? We can do that.”

He wrenched Will’s arm up a little higher and Will let out a cry of pain as the nerves in his shoulder stretched over the socket, threatening to pop out of place. He was pulled away from the wall, his arm still held tightly, the alphas other hand locked in his curls. He could feel them snap as he was dragged towards the bed, his bare feet sliding across the hardwood floor.

The alpha let go of Will’s hair and pushed him face first onto the bed, laying on it at an odd angle, he tried to squirm away as his pants were roughly pulled down his hips exposing his ass and thighs.

He tried to turn his head and look over his shoulder but the iron grip on his wrist, twisting his arm behind him didn’t let up. He heard the sound of clothing rustling behind him, the alpha growling low in his throat.

“Please.” Will gasped. He was ignored.

Suddenly there was pain like nothing Will had ever felt before. The alpha now laying on top of him, brutally thrusting into him. Will screamed at the violation, the pain, the burning and tearing he could feel. His vision was darkening, the pain in his abdomen overwhelming. He could hear someone sobbing as though from underwater, someone was begging, pleading for it to stop.

It was only when the Alpha forced his knot into Will’s body that Will finally passed out.

———————-

What followed was a blur of days. Sometimes the sky outside was dark, sometimes light. He was vaguely aware of eating when food was brought to him. Vaguely aware of drinking water that tasted bitter, in too much pain to say no.

Something in the water made Will's skin feel like it was on fire. It was like his heat but so much worse. The cramping tangle of knots in his belly crested like waves, muscle spasms that ran all through his body. He felt like he was convulsing as wave after wave contracted through his limbs. The Alpha poured more water down Will's throat as he lay on the bed sweating the world around him shimmering as though he was back on the docks looking across the lake at the heat rising from the surface. He wondered if he would melt right there on the bed, his skin sloughing from his muscles to end up on the floor, his bones turning to dust and blowing away in a nonexistent wind.

When he slept he dreamed on being on the boat with his dad, the water rocking them back and forth. It was peaceful like memories of childhood are peaceful, sunny warm days. He sat with his legs dangling over the side, a fishing rod in his hand. His dad would appear beside him and take his arm in his hand, pull Will up onto the boat deck but the hand was too rough, his dad was never rough with him, not that way, but the hand would tighten and he was being pushed down, more rough hands would join in then, pushing and pulling at him, gripping him too tight, hurting him. He would awake with the alpha on top of him, pushing himself into Will again and again, the bed rocking with the motion and Will would cry.

He was forced on to the alphas knot more times than Will could keep track of. The pain of it seemed to never end. He was slapped across the face, the ass. He was thrown to the floor, kicked, punched.

He was tied to the bedpost with handcuffs after hiding in the bathroom, sitting with his back to the door as the alpha slammed into him again and again.

He cried, begged. Fought back as much as he could when the dizzying drugs in his system wore off. Nothing stopped the alpha.

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Until the alpha came to him and demanded he shower, get dressed. He unlocked the handcuffs and Will did as he was told, the water just above cold as the hot water hurt his bruises and scrapes. When he left the bathroom the Alpha was sitting on the bed. He watched Will get dressed in the sweat pants and t-shirt that he wore as he left the warehouse.

Once he was dressed the alpha threw a pair of tennis shoes to the floor in front of Will and he sat down to put them on, wincing at the pain in his back. As he finished tying the laces the alpha stood and stalked towards him, Will ducked his head, his shoulders coming up to ears, fists clenched.

The alpha took Will's chin in his fingers, tilted his face to one side and pushed his nose to Will's skin, took a deep inhale. He let Will's face go and patted his cheek, seeming satisfied.

He held the top of Will's arm and marched him out of the room, pulling him down the stairs as Will struggled to get his feet to co operate.

They left the house and the Alpha opened the passenger door of his car and pushed Will inside, slamming the door as Will righted himself in the seat.

He walked around the front of the car and climbed in behind the wheel, started the car and turned to stare at Will until Will did up his seat belt. Then pulled away from the house.

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The alpha drove for hours, he didn't put his hand on Will's thigh this time and he was glad. He had enough bruises on his thighs that there wasn't really a spot of skin not littered with them.

By the time they pulled up to the grand victorian style house it was dark outside, the moon bright and heavy in the sky. There was a sign at the end of the driveway but Will could only make out the word 'home' and he wanted to laugh at the insanity of it. The building was huge. It stood stark against the dark sky. The empty windows like pale eyes looking down at

them. It reminded Will of the old houses in Baton Rouge, wide sweeping verandahs, double front doors.

The alpha exited the car and walked hastily up to the front door and rang the bell. It echoed through the tall building. He watched as the alpha shifted from foot to foot, almost nervous.

Will frowned, his brow furrowing, what could the monster, he spent the last god knows how many days, be scared of?

The door eventually opened but whoever answered it stayed in the shadows. Will could only make out that they were tall, and broad. Much taller then the alpha before him.

They exchanged hushed words, the alpha nodding and gesturing to the car, to Will. Will's breath sped up as the alpha jogged towards the car and stopped at the passenger door.

He opened it and leaned across Will to undo his seat belt. Will closed his eyes and held his breath, the smell of the alpha foul in his nose.

He pulled Will out by his arm and walked him to the person on the front porch. The stench of Alpha was overpowering from the man in the shadows. Will had never smelt anything or anyone so potent.

The tall alpha stepped forward and his face became illuminated from the dull lamp light pouring out of the open front door for a second and Will saw his eyes shine like a cats. The alpha had a scar that ran from under his nose to his top lip and gave him a permanent sneer, his head was shaved.

He was grabbed around the throat by the alpha, he didn't squeeze just held him in place. He leaned forward and scented Will in short sharp inhales. The hand around his throat was huge, the alphas fingers almost meeting under his nape.

The alpha growled and Will tried to step back but the hand held on tighter.

“You dare bring him to me like this?”

The tall alpha let go of Will’s neck and stood before the alpha, loomed over him.

“Well… I got him a week ago.” He shrugged. “He was expensive, you know I like their first heats. Couldn’t help it if it happened while I had him. I didn’t say he was pure man.” The alpha was looking everywhere except the tall alphas face.

The tall alpha growled. “LIAR!” He shouted, the sound echoed across the empty garden and gravel driveway to the trees that lined the property. The alpha cringed away.

The tall alpha struck the alpha across the face. He was still holding onto Will’s arm and they both tumbled off of the porch onto the dirt below. Will landed with a thud and hissed as the pain in his back shot up his spine.

Hands grabbed him under the arms and he was stood up before he could blink. The tall alpha closed the distance between them, his nose touching Will’s own.

“Into the house little omega.” He instructed with a growl and he let Will go.

He stumbled as he got his balance and looked at the alpha still cowering on the ground, back up at the tall alpha.

“Do not run. I will catch you.” The tall alpha sneered. Will nodded jerkily and turned to the house, walking up the porch steps and into the hallway of the tall alphas house. He didn’t dare to move any further than the front door. He also didn’t turn around as he heard an ear splitting scream, the sound of bones snapping and the gasping, gargling sound of someone drowning.

A hand appeared between his shoulder blades, pushing him forward gently. The door closed behind them both. When the hand left his back Will could feel wetness spreading over the t-shirt against his skin. Blood. The coppering tang filled the air.

A large hand took his wrist, spreading the blood there too and Will shivered.

“Come.” The tall alpha said. And led Will up the elegant stair case at the end of the hallway, past antique furniture, a clock ticking loudly on a side table. The air was musty and smelt of worn carpet and antiseptic.

The alpha climbed the stairs ahead of Will, leading the way to the second floor and into a room. He closed the door and Will chanced a look around. It was decorated almost similar to how Gerald’s bedroom looked and it made Will’s gut churn painfully, the memory of the old man telling Will he liked the frills just fine.

A large bed stood in the middle of the room against the far wall. A dresser, chest of drawers, side tables. Heavy curtains hung at the window lined with ruffles. The room smelled damp, like his dads mobile home. Like most of his dad’s mobile homes growing up.

“This is your room.” The alpha purred, proud somehow to be giving Will something so grand.

Will didn’t answer. He watched the Alpha light the bedside lamps, then go back to the door and switch off the overhead light. The room became cocooned in a warm glow. He had left little flakes of dried blood on the lamp switches and wall switch but he didn’t seem to notice.

The tall alpha stretched then, pushed his shoulders back and looked Will up and down. Will tried not to cower but the look was so intense he could almost feel it down to his bones.

“What is your name little omega?” The alpha whispered.

“Will.” He whispered back.

The alpha nodded as though this was a good name. Good enough.

“My name is Francis.”

USB

Chapter Notes

Hi. So. It's been a while. I'm sorry.
Real life sucks right now. Like, really really sucks.
This chapter got put on the back burner for a while, it was hard to write in the first place then add all the shit that's happening and I just couldn't finish it.
I've rushed the end, it might show, I dunno. But I wanted to get something published for you guys.
The next chapter is already planned out, kind of.
I know this doesn't make up for the big gap in chapter publishing but its the best I've got.
Love you all very much
Winston x x x

When Hannibal was a young man, his mother and father still thriving, his sister still filled with giggles and bright eyes, his father had owned dogs. Two large beasts with long legs and rough course hair, used for hunting. He remembers their warm bodies and sharp eyes. And although his father would insist they were not pets, the two animals would spend their winter evenings curled up together in front of the fireplace on a rug the same color as their fur, their snores a gentle chorus with the softly popping logs in the hearth.

Hannibal would often lay his head on the slow rise and fall of their ribs and listen to the air rush in and out of their bodies.

They were majestic things, galloping along side his father’s horse when on a hunt, teeth bared, ears pressed to their skull.

Hannibal would not use the word ‘majestic’ to describe the current dog who resided in his house. Winston.

A strange mix of breeds. Neither tall nor short, medium length brindle hair until the tail which swooped wide when wagged, with long thick fur. His tail the culprit of many knocked over glasses of water or cups of coffee left on the coffee table in Hannibal’s lounge or the den.

After the incident on the Verger Estate, Alana had returned home and said she had found Winston cowering in closet in the guest room, Adam's firetruck at his feet and believes the boy had hidden there when Mason's men had invaded her home, taking the dog with him.

He's just grateful the dog suffered no injuries, he had presumed him shot by Mason's men once they had all been kidnapped.

Winston, fortunately, was no worse for wear other than being hungry and needing to be cleaned up, twenty hours in a closet had meant the poor animal had relieved himself where he hid.

Adam had been so happy to see the dog again that he had wrapped his small arms around Winston's neck and cried into the animals fur for five minutes before relenting to Winstons whines and face licks.

Winston slept in Adam's bed, an excellent sleeping companion most of the time, until Adam woke and came into Hannibal's bed, the dog following and sleeping on the floor at the foot of the bed. One rule that Hannibal insisted upon, no dogs on his bed.

While Adam attended school, Winston had taken to following Hannibal about the house. His blunt nails clicking on the hardwood floor the only sound the dog made as Hannibal went about putting his home to rights. Cleaning, laundry, meal prep. The dog refused to enter the basement, but stood guard at the top of the stairs quite happily until Hannibal resurfaced.

Walking him was a morning ritual he undertook by himself, unless Adam was home from school but their evenings were always together. The pup holding tightly to Winston's lead as they strolled the sidewalk to the little dog park roughly ten minutes from the house. Once off the lead Winston would join the other dogs running about, Adam quick on his heels to run with them all, much to the delight of a few dog owners, who watched his pup with smiles as he joined in the rough and tumble games the dogs played.

Gentle nips and tugs on his clothing kept Adam out of danger, Winston always keeping an eye on his young master. Once even backing Adam into a corner by the fence when a large dog got too rough with the boy, growling at the other dog until its owner intervened.

Said owner was a quite rude to Hannibal as he too came over to see what the fuss was about, picking Adam up and giving Winston a treat from his pocket, thanking the dog for protecting Adam.

Many recipes had flashed through Hannibal's mind as the dog owner had likened Adam to a dog as the boy growled at him from his perch on Hannibal's hip, but Hannibal had just turned his back and walked away, Winston as his heel.

Killing right now felt reckless. While Alana's caution of him had eased off, their friendship solid enough that Hannibal could convince her he might not be as harmless as she thought, but only violent when his loved ones were in danger, Jack Crawford was not so easily manipulated.

He had come to the hospital to visit Hannibal in the days after the incident. Doctors insisting that Hannibal stay for observations, Alana to. Adam was in the children's ward for three hours before the nurses relented and allowed the pup to stay with Hannibal in his room. Apparently biting a nurse then hiding in a toy box in the day room was enough to convince them they were all better off letting the pup stay with him. He had only sustained a bruise to his face and some scrapes to his knees.

Hannibal's statement to the police and then to Jack Crawford had not changed. Ultimately, his omega was taken, his friend and pup kidnapped, he was hurt and kidnapped himself. What he did and how he did it was the result of Alpha instinct. Alana corroborated his story. Wether or not she saw the glint in his eye as he killed to protect them, she didn't say.

But Jack Crawford was a man who, once he had an idea, was reluctant to let it go. It was too smooth for him. To easy. Hannibal, a mild mannered, upper class, civilized Alpha, capable of great violence, had to be hiding something. His suspicions already on alert following the killing of Tobias Budge in Hannibal's office.

So Jack was keeping tabs on him. He knew the house visit once he and Adam were home wasn't out of the kindness of his heart. He knew the other alpha was going to watch him for a while. So killing, even if the pig who insulted his pup completely deserved being made into a succulent Beef Wellington, was allowed to live. For now at least.

Winston did not like Jack. Sniffing the man's shoes as he entered the house was enough to make the dog back up, the fur on his spine stand on end, his ears flat. Jack shrugged it off and said most animals didn't like him. Hannibal thought it was because Jack smelled of the lab, dead bodies and gun powder, he knew if he had fur running down his own back it would stand on end just the same.

What Winston did like was drinking the water out of the toilet bowl in the first floor restroom, no matter how many times Hannibal closed the seat lid and the door to the room, Winston would find a way in and leave a trail of slobbery water droplets as he exited to the room.

He had suspected it was Adam letting the animal in there but when they came home from shopping one afternoon, the bathroom door was open and the water droplets on the floor. Winston stood at his feet, head tilted to the side giving Hannibal the impression of 'Well, what are you going to do about it then?'. Hannibal just huffed and walked away.

Car rides were also something the dog could not get used too, much to Adam's chagrin. The boy had tried his damnedest to lure the dog to get into the back seat with him but Winston wouldn't budge from the doorway. So school drop off, pick up and any shopping was done without the dog beside him. Really it was the only time Winston wasn't beside Adam, every other moment of the day they were inseparable. He sat at Adam's feet under the dinner table during meal times and laid on the bathmat when Adam had a bath, sometimes peaking over the bath edge allowing the pup to place bubble on his snout which he sneezed away making the boy laugh.

Johns Hopkins, like most hospitals had very strict rules about animals, only service dogs were permitted into the building. So when Adam and Hannibal visited Will, the dog had to stay at home.

Hannibal had initially been reluctant to let Adam come with him to see Will. Alana had voiced her concerns with exposing the pup to something as traumatic as seeing his mother laying unresponsive in a bed, bruised and silent. But Hannibal had described how he had found Will initially, the scars and bruising. Obviously he omitted the full truth, that he had found Will unconscious in the basement of the mechanics home after following Adam down the stairs. He had told everyone that Will had seen him and asked for help. But the truth didn't matter, not really.

She had suggested a short visit initially, letting Adam choose how long to stay. But the pup hadn't even flinched when he saw his mother, pale skinned, covered in tubes and wires. Adam had just let go of Hannibal's hand, climbed the railing and laid down gently beside Will's sleeping body. He curled up beside him, put his hand on Will's chest and watched it rise and fall to Will's steady breathing.

Hannibal took his normal seat and picked up the book he had left on the bedside table, letting the pup find comfort in the silence and scent of his mother. They had stayed like that for two hours, until Hannibal knew Adam would be hungry. The pup didn't make a fuss as they left, he kissed and stroked his mothers hair, climbed from the bed and took Hannibal's hand again.

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It wasn't until Freddie Lounds snuck into Will's room that news of Hannibal's involvement at the Verger Estate, the death of Mason Verger at the hands of an omega, and Mason's sordid dealings with omega trafficking came to light.

Then life became even more complicated.

The article in TattleCrime was damning. Hannibal had told everyone, Jack, Alana, the FBI, that he had killed Mason after Mason had attacked Will. Apparently there was CCTV footage that proved otherwise. It was left on the Jack's desk in a plain envelope, no address, no note. The USB contained footage from the entire estate. It captured, in grainy black and white film, tucked into the top left of the screen, Will pouncing on Mason and stabbing him. The camera angled at the pig pens and not at the platform above them but in shot nonetheless.

Stills from the fight were included in the article titled 'The Man Who Cried Pig: Killer Psychiatrist & his vicious Omega Lover Murder Pig Breeding Slave Owner'.

The story also had photos of Will in his hospital bed, the sheets pulled down, his frail battered body exposed to the harsh lights of the room. Bandages, IV's, bruises. His hysterectomy scar still healing, all there for the world to see. Freddie also had photos of the aftermath of the Verger Farm, the bloody corridors where guards had died by Hannibal's hand. She had managed to find the room in which several omegas had been found, presumably the same rooms that held Will captive.

Those omegas were now either reunited with their families or in protective custody, their names kept out of any and all files available. Jack and some higher ups knew who they were, but that's all.

Freddie Lounds had done some digging on Hannibal too. The death of Tobias Budge by Hannibal's hand, in his office no less was mentioned in several passages. She writes that he could have killed Franklyn Froideveaux too. And why not? He had killed at least a dozen men on his way to save Will, why wouldn't he also kill an innocent man? He was clearly capable according to her.

The day of the articles release Hannibal had missed a call from Alana, Adam needed help with his coat and Winston was underfoot as the dog would rarely leave the pups side, his phone had been on the kitchen counter. He went to call her back and his phone lit up with Jack's caller ID instead.

Jack didn't shout per se, his voice was calm, but the underlying hardness to his tone, short clipped sentences, disguised his anger. Hannibal was to meet him, right now, in his office to discuss the footage left on his desk that morning and Freddie Lounds article. When Hannibal said he hadn't seen it, he told Hannibal not read it, they would discuss it together. Anger flared in his gut. Whatever Freddie had written was clearly not something he would like. Jack assured him, he and Adam were safe but it was prudent he meet with him.

Already wearing his coat and ready to get Adam to school Hannibal reluctantly agreed. As he drove the short distance to Adam's school he considered his options. Would Freddie's article reveal his identity as The Chesapeake Ripper? And what would that mean to Adam, to Will?

He could leave now, before Jack and the FBI had him within their clutches, he could be walking straight into the belly of the beast.

Hannibal had the means to get away. He had property all over Europe he could retreat too. He had fake ID for himself but not for Adam or Will. Getting ID wouldn't be an issue for Adam but Will would be a problem. The image on the ORO website was of a much younger, innocent Will Graham. And with Will sleeping he wouldn't be able to take a photo of him, wouldn't be able to transport him.

The drive to Quantico had Hannibal making various phone calls to attain ID for Adam, a passport, a birth certificate. All fake of course, but money wasn't an issue, the forgeries would be perfect.

But he was getting ahead of himself. Jack just wanted a meeting. Thats all it was.

He was met in the foyer of the Behavioral Sciences building by Jack and another agent who was introduced to him as Miriam Lass, a young woman with blonde hair and intelligent blue eyes. She seemed slightly nervous, obviously only recently qualified. She shook his hand as they walked to Jack's office, her grip firm. She was an alpha like himself but clearly on suppressants, her scent dull, it was like trying to smell a wax candle wrapped in plastic.

"Thank you for coming in Doctor Lecter." Jack said. "I presume you didn't read the article as I suggested."

Hannibal shook his head. "Of course. As it's by the infamous Freddie Lounds I can only presume its rather nefarious, her writing is rather embellished with fantastical theories."

Jack just grunted and pushed open his office door, then held it open for Hannibal to step through, followed by Miriam, then himself.

He sighed as he took his large chair behind his desk and Hannibal took the seat he had so often sat in in the past. Miriam stood to the side of the room, her back to the filing cabinets. Observing, not participating it would seem.

"I must say this is all rather ominous Jack." Hannibal mused, his tone deliberately light.

Jack leaned forward on his elbows against the top of his desk, his hands clasped together, fingers entwined. "This morning I was left an envelope on my desk, it contained a USB. I, of course, took it down to the lab and let Zeller run it for viruses , etc."

Hannibal sat silent.

“Well it was clean.” Jack continued. “So I brought it back here and plugged it into my laptop.” He turned then to the laptop on the desk, open and powered up. “I’d like you to watch something.”

He turned the laptop until it was fully facing Hannibal, obviously not needing to watch it again himself. He hit the spacebar and the screen came alive, the player opened to fill the screen.

Hannibal took a deep breath. A tiny image of himself was visible in the top let corner of the screen, the rest filled with pig pens and their inhabitants. He was frozen mid strike, his hand raised above his head, grappling with Cordell.

Jack hit the spacebar again and the video started. It was silent, black and white, the image slightly distorted. He watched himself strike Cordell again and again with the length of chain around his fist. His eyes then caught Will standing from his slump on the floor, Mason turning the last second to see Will launch himself at him. He sees himself turn away from Cordell to watch Will, crouched now on top of Mason, raise the knife and bring it down into the man’s neck, then himself rushing forward, Will falling to the side into his arms, then his own reaction to what he thought were Will’s last moments, his face lifting up, his own mouth open wide in a scream.

Suddenly the image stops there and Hannibal sees Miriam’s hand pull away from the laptop, she had been the one to pause it. Jack sat stern faced behind the laptop, he pushed it closed slowly, the screen going black as the lid is shut.

He can feel himself tremble slightly, his leans back in his seat, crosses his leg over his knee and tries to rest his hands calmly. His scent must give away his anger, his fear, his pain at seeing Will be split open again. A cup of coffee appears on the desk in front of him, Miriam disappearing from his peripheral again.

“Why did you lie Doctor Lecter?” Jack asks. He’s frowning, he’s sitting leaning his elbows on his desk again.

Hannibal takes a deep breath and looks away. He allows some of the pain of seeing Will hurt again to seep into his voice. “I… I wanted to protect Will.”

Jack leans back in his chair and grips the arm rests. “From what I saw it looked like you wanted Will to kill Mason Verger.”

Hannibal’s eyes snap to Jack, his anger suddenly bubbling to the surface, uncontrollable. “You know full well what that animal did to Will.”

“Oh so you agree?”

Hannibal shakes his head. “I was too far away to stop him.”

Jack nods then, only slightly and lets out a puff of breathe. “It looks like Will planned to kill Mason, when you’re fighting with Cordell, it’s clear that Will looks for and picks up a knife.”

“What do you want me to say Jack? That Will was wrong to kill the man that tortured him for years, threatened his life over and over again? Raped him, beat him, killed his daughter?” Hannibal looks away again, his eyes distant. “I cant do that.”

“I’m not saying Mason Verger wasn’t a nasty piece of shit Doctor Lecter. But he should have been arrested, tried for his crimes. Like the law states.”

Hannibal lets out a small laugh, its bitter and sharp. “Anything other than death by Will’s hand wouldn’t have been justice.”

Jack closes his eyes. “I didn’t hear that.” He opens them and looks to Hannibal’s left and points at Miriam. “And neither did you.”

“Yes sir.” Miriam replies.

Jack looks at Hannibal again, his elbows on the arms of his chair, fingers steepled together. “This doesn’t look good, you know that.”

Hannibal nods.

“Will has gone through more than anyone should have. His life has been a series of tortures, one after another Jack. I did what I could to protect him.” Hannibal pauses and leans a little further forward in his seat. “Jack, when Will wakes, the last thing he needs is a trial to prove his innocence. That was taken from him. Taken from him by cruel men like Mason Verger.”

Jack stands from his chair slowly, he walks to a file cabinet, beside which Miriam is still standing, quietly observing the conversation. He opens a draw and searches for a moment. Finding what he wants he returns to his desk with a manila folder. As he sits he places the file in front of Hannibal but places his hand flat on it, holding it closed.

“This is the incident report of the attack in your office by Tobias Budge.”

Hannibal tilts his head. “Are you accusing me of something Agent Crawford?”

The change in name makes Jack remove his hand from the folder and lean back in his chair. He sighs and gestures for Hannibal to open the folder. Hannibal stays where he is.

“Doctor Lecter, is everything in the report true? To the best of your knowledge?”

Hannibal runs his hand down the front of his tie. His nervous tic. He knows it. He looks up and sees that Miriam has caught the action too.

“I’ll repeat my question Jack. Are you accusing me of something? Have you let the viscous words of Freddie Lounds put doubt in your mind about me?”

“She was right about Will killing Mason. Is she right about this?” He points to the folder on his desk, the action sharp.

“The statement I made in regard to Tobias Budge killing my patient and attempting to kill me, resulting in his death by my hand, in self defense, is true.”

Jack nods slowly, he purses his lips then sighs. “Did you know that Tobias Budge and Mason Verger were acquaintances?”

Hannibal lets a small smile pass on his lips. “The arts scene in Baltimore is a small one, it doesn’t surprise me.”

“Mason Verger was also a patient of yours. That’s another patient of your’s who died.” Jack pushes. He wants a reaction and Hannibal refuses to give it to him.

“This is information I have shared with you willingly Jack. It’s all in the statement I gave weeks ago. He was an occasional patient. I met with him for three appointments.” Hannibal straightens his back and pushes his shoulders back.

“If I keep digging Hannibal, will I find more patients of yours dead? Or will I find more patients of yours are actually killers?”

Silence hangs in the air between them.

Hannibal tries not to bristle, the hair on the back of his neck feels like its standing on end. “I believe Mason was never truly a patient of mine. He simply wanted to find Will and taunt me in the process.” He paused taking a deep breath. “I don’t feel comfortable continuing this conversation without my lawyer present Jack. Do I need to call my lawyer?”

Jack makes eye contact with Miriam as she stands at the back of the room. Something silent passes between them and Jack sighs.

“No Doctor Lecter. No lawyers necessary.” He stands and holds his hand out to shake.

Hannibal rises and grips Jack’s hand briefly. He re-buttons his jacket and leaves the office without a word.

As Hannibal drives back to Baltimore he makes the decision to heavily edit certain patient files.

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